

THE O. E. LIBRARY CRITIC

Published monthly at 1207 Q St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

BY

The O. E. Library League

Vol. XXIV

June-July, 1936

No. 3

Yearly subscription, United States and Canada, fifty cents; foreign, two shillings sixpence or 62 cents. Single copies, five cents. *Blank* (unfilled) British postal orders and stamps, Canadian paper money and stamps accepted.

DEMOLISHING THE MAHATMAS

Who Wrote The Mahatma Letters? By *Harold Edward Hare* and *William Loftus Hare*. pp. 326; index, illustrations. London, Williams & Norgate, 1936. 10/6; \$3.75.

The existence of Mahatmas and the genuineness of the various written communications purporting to come from them have long been a matter of controversy. It is a matter of some importance as a great part of the theosophical philosophy is based on the belief in the existence of superior men, called Masters, Elder Brothers and the like, and in the *bona fides* of H. P. Blavatsky. The above contribution to the discussion maintains that the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* and other supposed Mahatmic communications were the product of the hand of Madame Blavatsky, who invented the Mahatmas out of the whole cloth, wrote the letters, and was, therefore, one of the greatest impostors of our times. It is claimed that with this "exposure" the whole theosophical structure falls to the ground; it is demolished from attic to sub-basement, and there is nothing left for theosophists to do but to meditate on what fools they have been.

Who are the Authors?

While the book is to be taken on its merits or demerits, one may say a word of the authors. Of Harold E. Hare I know nothing whatever except that he is the brother of William Loftus Hare—a bit of very reprehensible ignorance on my part, no doubt—and I am left to judge him by his work. William Loftus Hare is of Quaker family, is, or was, editor of a British agricultural paper, *The Ploughshare*; was at one time a member of the Adyar Theosophical Society, but much to his credit, an opponent of the vagaries of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater. As late as 1922 he was a member of the National Council of the British Section and from 1916 to 1919 Director of Studies in Comparative Religion and Philosophy to the T. S. in England and Wales. He was therefore closely in touch with doings in the Adyar T. S. Because of his very justifiable opposition to the Besant-Leadbeater cult he was constantly in hot water with the powers in control, was relieved of his position as Director of Studies in Comparative Religion and Philosophy, and thereupon resigned from the T. S. Upon the founding of the Society for the Promotion of the Study of Religions he became editor of its excellent journal, but was dropped from that office in 1935 because, so I am authoritatively informed, of his excessively critical attitude towards everybody and everything. Thereupon he left that society likewise. It was in 1927 that he communicated to me his conviction that the Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett were fraudulent and the work of H. P. B., and that the attitude of the theosophists regarding Mahatmas is untenable. The present work is an elaboration of that opinion.

Methods of Examination—Handwritings

A portion of the present work (pp. 224-251) is devoted to the question of handwriting. W. L. Hare was permitted to examine the manuscripts

of the Mahatma Letters and the H. P. B. Letters to Sinnett in the presence of Mr. A. Trevor Barker, their editor, and I am informed by Mr. Barker that one or two evenings were spent in this way. Besides this necessarily very cursory inspection a few facsimiles of Mahatmic Letters have appeared in public print and could be studied at leisure. These will be found in Mr. Jinarajadasa's book, *Did Madame Blavatsky Forge the Mahatma Letters?*, (ignored by the author)) and in his earlier book, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, Vol II*, and a few in Mr. Barker's edition of the Letters to Sinnett.

Today the equipment of a reputable handwriting expert is a highly technical and elaborate one, demanding much study and experience, and the hit or miss—often miss—methods of the days of Hodgson and Netherclift would be laughed at. Nevertheless Mr. Hare does not hesitate to find damning similarities in the several scripts, on most of which he could not have spent more than a few minutes, and to assume that as these exist both in the Mahatmic letters and in the letters of H. P. B., therefore H. P. B. wrote the Mahatma Letters. Mr. Jinarajadasa presents facsimiles of communications from *six* different purported Masters, comparing them with facsimiles of letters by H. P. B., Damodar, Col. Olcott and others. Certainly to the superficial observer each of these scripts differs totally from the others. Mr. Hare professes to find certain characteristic Russian features in the K. H. letters (pp. 228; 244), thereby fastening them on H. P. B., but as he makes the assertion without an iota of detailed evidence it must be said that it has no more value than a mere guess. If the authors propose to pass their judgment off as expert evidence it must certainly be called farcical.

The Fadéef Letter

The first known Mahatmic script is the French letter received November 7th, 1870, at Odessa by Madame Fadéef, H. P. B.'s aunt, informing her that her niece, from whom her relatives had not heard for a long time, was safe and well and would soon return to them. This letter, delivered to Madame Fadéef by a mysterious Oriental, "who then disappeared before my very eyes," so she reported, is in the well-known "K. H. script" so familiar later on, up to 1886 at least. The original is at Adyar and a facsimile is to be found in the two books of C. Jinarajadasa, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, Vol. II*, p. 13 and *Did Madame Blavatsky Forge the Mahatma Letters?*, p. 7. Between the handwriting of this letter and the much later ones there is no discernible difference, so far as can be seen from the available facsimiles, notwithstanding the authors' assertion that the K. H. handwriting "degenerates into a scribble" (p. 245). Comparison of the numerous facsimiles in the above books and in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* shows the writing to be as clear, careful and characteristic in 1886 (see below) as in 1870. The Hare brothers maintain that the Fadéef letter was written by H. P. B. herself, who was preparing to put on airs with her family on her return (p. 303). Think of that, will you! H. P. B. had already concocted the Mahatma hoax in 1870, wrote a faked letter, hired an Oriental to carry it to Odessa and *mirabile dictu*—to vanish before Madame Fadéef's own eyes! Further, as there are no known K. H. letters between 1870 and 1880, she must have nursed her idea of a grand imposture, remembering the exact style of writing she used in the Fadéef letter, so as to put it over on Sinnett. Perhaps she spent her spare moments between 1870 and 1880 practising "K. H. script", so as not to forget it! She even refrained from practising it on Olcott, a most likely victim. All of which is most fishy.

Facsimiles of several purported letters from other Mahatmas received by Olcott, mostly while still in America in the early T. S. days, will be found in the two books of Mr. Jinarajadasa above named. The scripts are as different among themselves as could well be imagined. The Hare Brothers profess to discover certain features in common, for example a disguised Germanic hand in the Serapis letters (why Germanic?).

H. P. B. Wrote Them All!

The Hare hypothesis is that all of these numerous letters were written by H. P. B. herself, using *six different handwritings* besides her own and that she did this through a space of over fifteen years (1870-1886) without any marked change in any of them. I do not deny that such a feat might be possible for a skilled forger, but H. P. B. gave no outward evidence of possessing such skill. There are few who could carry on such a game for fifteen years without betraying themselves among their intimate associates. Furthermore H. P. B. was notoriously disorderly in her habits; her papers were scattered about her room and it is unimaginable that some scraps of her faked writing would not have been left lying about and have been seen by someone, notably Olcott, who was with her daily and was quite blunt enough to have come out with it. We have likewise to assume that H. P. B. had a considerable number of confederates paid to do her bidding, not one of whom has confessed or been exposed. In short, the Hare Brothers are asking us to accept something little short of a miracle in support of their hypothesis, for which they give little evidence beyond mere surmises.

Kinds of Paper

W. L. Hare, as a result of his inspection of the Sinnett collection, now in charge of Miss Maude Hoffman, his executrix, has given us a very brief description of the 142 letters and notes, mostly from Mahatmas M. and K. H., as to paper and ink or pencil used (pp. 230-238), as well as of some of the Blavatsky and other letters. For this information we are grateful. It is noted that several of these Mahatma letters are written on Sinnett's office or personal stationery, and that some are on mere scraps of pink, yellow or blue paper purchasable in any shop—"billet-doux" stationery, they call it (p. 224). To him this is damning proof that the letters were written by H. P. B. on any paper at hand, and passed off on Sinnett.

H. P. B. No Fool; nor Sinnett Neither

The Hare theory that H. P. B. wrote these letters assumes that she, so shrewd a forger as to be able to keep up the farce for years, writing six different scripts without detection, was fool enough to steal Sinnett's own stationery and write Mahatmic communications on it and expect to be believed. It further sets Sinnett down for a fool, instead of being a keen business man. He must have noticed it. Would any deceiver write you pretended Mahatmic communications on your own letterheads? On the "precipitation" theory, which, of course, the Hare Brothers do not accept, nothing is more likely than that the precipitating agent would use any paper at hand, instead of wasting effort in generating it *de novo*. I regard this one fact as a strong argument for the genuineness of the letters.

Hare Brothers' Examination of Printed Texts

While restricted in their opportunity to examine the original letters the Hare Brothers had ample time to study the printed volumes, the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* and *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*. Here we are presented with their results, and a worse case of flea-biting, of straining at gnats and swallowing camels I have seldom encountered. The study claims to prove that there are such similarities of expression in the writings of the Mahatmas and of H. P. B. that she must have written all of them. Here we find what seems to be a hang-over from the Besant regime. Besant gave it out that the Masters are perfect men, men who have learned all that earth life could teach them. Students of Blavatsky and the Mahatma Letters know that no such claim is made either by H. P. B. or the Mahatmas themselves. They are regarded as real men, somewhat above the ordinary mortal, but still *men*. The authors, while disclaiming all belief in Mahatmas, seem to assume that if they exist at all they must be perfect and omniscient, even in their knowledge of the English language and literature, and that errors in punctuation, spelling, quotations, the use of Gallicisms

or colloquialisms such as anybody may do in writing letters, yea, even occasionally of Americanisms, must prove that they are not only not Mahatmas, but don't exist at all, and, if similar faults are found in H. P. B.'s hastily written letters, she must have written the Mahatma Letters likewise; she must have invented all. Space is lacking to cite more than a few examples.

"Key-Words"

Both the Mahatmas and H. P. B. occasionally use the admonition "Try" (pp. 177-179). How silly. Doesn't anybody but a moron know that every mother admonishes her child to "try"? Doesn't every teacher do the same? Both H. P. B. and the Mahatmas use the word "though" in a commonly occurring colloquial manner; thus "All I could obtain from Him though" (K. H. in M. L. p. 210), while H. P. B. writes "One thing I can tell you though" (pp. 181-182). Both H. P. B. and the Mahatma are blamed for using "better" incorrectly according to the canons of good English; thus, "You better write me" (K. H. in M. L., p. 26), while H. P. B. writes "I better not say a word more" (B. L. p. 57). And the small word "but". Its colloquial use by K. H. and H. P. B. is simply damning. K. H. writes "to awake but at the hour of the last judgement" (M. L. p. 131) while H. P. B. writes "It reached Damodar but Sunday" (B. L. p. 16). These three words, "though", "better", "but", used colloquially by both H. P. B. and the Mahatma—and it must be said by thousands daily,—simply prove that they are one and the same person. To show the authors' critical itch *ad absurdum*, their search through the Mahatma Letters and the H. P. B. Letters shows the following results (p. 182):

Try...H. P. B., 7 times; K. H., 10 times; Serapis, 10 times.

But...H. P. B., 7 times; Mahatmas, 12 times.

Though...H. P. B., 7 times; Mahatmas, 8 times.

and this in these two large volumes of letters of roughly five-hundred pages each! Lordie Me! If any but Loftus Hare had based an argument on such a slender gleaning I should say that his ears had outstripped his brains.

They Split Their Infinitives!

H. P. B. and the Mahatmas occasionally split their infinitives (p. 183). This proves that H. P. B. wrote the Mahatma Letters. This may not be elegant English, but it is done constantly, even by people of culture and in the press, and is conceded by some writers of authority to be permissible. To argue that if two writers now and then use a split infinitive they must be one and the same is nothing but an example of rabid flea-biting. And H. P. B., to whom, as a cultivated Russian, French was as a second mother tongue, sometimes uses Gallicisms, that is, she translates a French phrase into English literally. And Mahatma K. H. sometimes does the same—K. H., who studied in Europe and knew French as well as English. And now and then he uses an "Americanism", as does H. P. B., and many an Englishman who has never been in America. That makes the twain one person. And, even worse, both of them occasionally express some sentiment in semi-scriptural form (pp. 200-202), as most of us do, instead of getting out our King James version and following it *verbatim*. And both of them on one occasion speak of "Simon" Stylites instead of "Simeon" Stylites (pp. 192-193). Hereafter, when we find two persons making a similar trivial error in Christian hagiology we must assume them to be one and the same. In this case it was Olcott, not H. P. B., who was to blame. Perhaps he wrote the Letters.

I would fain linger longer in this gallery of curiosities of criticism, but I must hurry along and refer the reader to the book itself. At the very most they make the Hare theory vaguely possible, but involve almost inconceivable difficulties.

Facts to the Contrary

Are there any facts which show that some of these letters were produced and received under conditions where H. P. B. could not possibly

have been involved either directly or aided by confederates? The authors have totally, and much to their discredit, ignored such evidence for the defense, which is accessible to everybody. First, how about "precipitation"?

Precipitated Communications

The formation of written communications at a distance, or as enclosures in other correspondence, is usually designated as "precipitation". The authors do not believe in this (pp. 127-139) and indeed the propounded explanations are by no means clear. Even if indisputably proved it would be as mysterious as the appearance in a New York newspaper three hours later of a photograph of a military review by Mussolini would have seemed to our grandparents. But the question is not *how*, but *whether* such a phenomenon ever occurs, and if so, whether under conditions which prove that K. H. and other Mahatmic scripts appear where H. P. B. could by no possibility have been involved. If so, it demolishes the charge that she wrote the remaining letters, or makes it too improbable to be worth considering.

Specific Cases of Mahatma Letters in Absence of H. P. B.

I can cite but three cases and must refer to the appended list of references for others.

Olcott, whose honesty no one doubts, describes (*Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, pp. 35-37) the receipt of letters from distant correspondents, while in America, which were handed to him personally by the postman, which contained Mahatmic writing on blank spaces. His story is worth reading. Collusion of his distant correspondents with H. P. B. seems out of the question except upon almost impossible assumptions.

The Tookaram Tatya Letter

On June 1st, 1886 Col. Olcott, then at Adyar, wrote a business letter to Mr. Tookaram Tatya, a well-known and highly reputable theosophist living in Bombay. Mr. Tatya replied June 5th, appending an inquiry about Damodar. When received by Col. Olcott it was found that the blank back of the paper was covered by a communication in the well-known K. H. script, conveying information about Damodar. This letter was seen and certified to and endorsed by T. Subba Row, Mr. Cooper-Oakley and another. The facsimile can be seen in Jinarajadasa's book, *Did Madame Blavatsky Forge the Mahatma Letters?* (p. 23). Now the interesting point is that at this time H. P. B. was in Germany, yet the letter is undoubtedly K. H. script, and signed by him. It was not on the back of Tatya's letter when he wrote it—the paper was too thin to permit its escaping notice,—yet it was there when Olcott received it. Even assuming that some confederate of H. P. B. in Tatya's office had had a chance to write it before mailing, or that another confederate in Olcott's office had tampered with it, or even that Tatya, known to be an honorable man, had written it, the fact remains that a perfect sample of K. H. writing was produced in India by another than H. P. B. herself, who was in Germany. The facsimile of this letter and its history were available to the Hare Brothers, not only in the Jinarajadasa book, but in *The Theosophist* of a year or two earlier. Yet they conveniently ignore it.

The Shannon Letter

Col. Olcott, traveling from India to London on the steamer Shannon in August, 1888, H.P.B. being in London or Paris, "received phenomenally" while alone in his cabin, between Port Said and Brindisi, a long letter from Mahatma K. H. advising him what to do on reaching London. This letter is on file at Adyar and is published in Jinarajadasa's *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Vol. I, (p. 50; notes p. 116). No facsimile is available. On the Hare hypothesis we must assume that H. P. B., in England, wrote the letter, sent it to some confederate in India or Egypt, who boarded the steamer and dropped it in Olcott's cabin while he was there, without being detected. No trapdoors or holes in the ceiling either. This would involve poor H. P. B. paying traveling ex-

penses and a fee. Here, too, this incident is ignored by the Brothers Hare.

Other examples of letters mysteriously received under conditions where neither H. P. B. nor a confederate could have been involved will be found in the books mentioned below, especially in Besant's *H. P. Blavatsky and the Masters of the Wisdom*.

Visible Appearances of Mahatmas

Quite apart from the matter of letters, there seems to be abundant evidence of the existence of Mahatmas with supernormal powers. They have been seen and conversed with by various persons under conditions precluding the possibility of illusion or deception. One of the most interesting cases is the one described by Col. Olcott (*Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. I, pp. 377-81), where a gigantic Oriental of the most majestic mien appeared to him in his room in New York, the door being closed and he himself fully awake, discussed his theosophical future with him and vanished on the spot, but before doing so, dropping his turban as evidence of his visit, said turban being now at Adyar. This was the supposedly mythical Mahatma M., and Olcott met and conversed with him on other occasions in India. Are we to suppose that H. P. B. was able to locate such a majestic Hindu in New York, and hire him to impersonate a Mahatma before Olcott, playing a role which no hireling could fill, and then transport him to India to play the same part with Olcott and others, including becoming the teacher of T. Subba Row? And this is but part of the available evidence.

After Writing the Big Q. E. D.

The authors, after emphatically proclaiming that they have proved that H. P. B. invented the Mahatmas, wrote their letters and faked the whole scheme of Theosophy, and having ignored all evidence to the contrary which was accessible to them, devote some space to a discussion of the vagaries of Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. Here at last we see that they have set out on the path of appeal to prejudice. While sympathizing with their strictures on these two worthies, I contend that this has nothing whatever to do with H. P. B. and the Mahatma Letters, which were on hand long before Besant and Leadbeater came in sight. This will influence only the weak-minded. Space cannot be given here to the various mistakes in the book, as where it is assumed that the Philosophical Teachings in the Mahatma Letters came suddenly to an end and were followed by a series of grouchy and critical letters (p. 252), whereas the authors, had they been more intent on facts and less absorbed in catching fleas, would have seen from the dates that this was not a fact. Their obtuseness is further indicated by the statement: "From these turgid pages not one memorable passage has emerged as a quotable text or maxim after fifty years of faith. . . ."—an assertion which is pure bosh, as the Letters are constantly quoted, and a considerable volume of such passages was prepared by William Kingsland.

Concluding, and without intending to reflect on the sincerity of the authors, who doubtless have done their best, it must be said that the whole book reminds one of the prosecuting attorney who assumes guilt in advance, uses every means, fair or otherwise, to convict, ignores evidence and finally, after his Q. E. D., proceeds to abuse the defendants before the jury. This is not the attitude of the impartial judge who weighs both sides. The whole book presents an example of the critical spirit gone mad; it affords a psychological problem bordering on the abnormal.

To those who would look more carefully into the subject and get the opposing evidence I commend the following:

C. Jinarajadasa, *Did Madame Blavatsky Forge the Mahatma Letters?* (\$1.25). This contains facsimiles.

C. Jinarajadasa, *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom Vol. II*, with facsimiles (\$2.00).

Annie Besant, *H. P. Blavatsky and the Masters of the Wisdom* (ppr. 50 cents).

Hints on Esoteric Theosophy (out of print).

H. S. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, especially Vol. (out of print) but also Vols. II, III, IV (\$3.50 each).

Goose-Stepping the T. S.

In theosophical circles, chiefly in those centering about Adyar, we hear much about "God's Plan of Evolution". About just what this plan is there may have been some question, but now we are to be left in no further doubt. God and Dr. Arundale have gotten together and the result is a poster 19 inches wide by 35 inches tall, assuring us not only that "There is a Plan", but telling us just how to fall in line. I infer from internal evidence that it is Dr. Arundale rather than the Almighty who did most of the work.

The poster elaborates a plan for a series of semi-weekly meetings, Sundays and Wednesdays, to be held all over the world in theosophical lodges, beginning October 1st next and continuing till March 24th. The members are not left in any uncertainty as to what to do and the precise moment and exact way to do it. There are not only general directions, but the utmost detail, the number of speakers, how many minutes to speak, to how many members books on the subject of the day are to be issued, when to eat and when to pour tea, and much more. I am reminded of Master K. H.'s (?) specific directions to Mr. Leadbeater about Krishnamurti's socks and undies.

It seems to be characteristic of Dr. Arundale that with God's approval he is trying to goose-step the T. S., and that in double quick time. The T. S. is to be one big machine, everybody doing the same thing in all parts of the world at the same time, and doing it fast. It is a species of regimentation with Dr. Arundale as the commander-in-chief. Nothing is left to individual initiative, to spontaneous thought. Further, the amount of work he has laid down for these few months is far more than anyone could undertake profitably in the allotted time and there is danger that mental indigestion will ensue and that members will feel "Now that we are through with that job, let's forget all about it and await a new series of orders on something else."

So it happened that I found the "Plan" decidedly entertaining—it is so thoroughly Georgian. Nevertheless there are two features of the program which are worthy of the highest commendation. Neither is perfect, but both seem to betoken a degree of vision regarding the duties of a theosophist to the world.

One of these consists of a long list of books to be studied, and we find as much variety as in a grab bag. The commendable feature of this list is that whereas heretofore recommended lists of books have been exclusively theosophical or pseudo-theosophical, here we find many written by prominent thinkers who are by no means theosophists and who would doubtless be surprised and shocked to discover themselves bedfellows of Leadbeater with his absurd *Man: Whence, How and Whither* and his *Hidden Side of Things*. Among the writers we find Alexis Carrel, G. Santayana, Will Durant, Gen Smuts, J. S. Haldane, Eddington, John Dewey, Dean Inge, Edward Bellamy, H. G. Wells, Henri Bergson, U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, C. A. F. Rhys Davids, and many others.

This is just as it should be even though one might wish some other titles substituted for some of the theosophical books. The Doctor might have substituted *Light on the Path* and the *Bhagavad Gita* for his own productions, and have included a few books of science, especially on the history of science and the development of physiological knowledge. Still, these books will show theosophists that there are various ways of thinking not strictly in accord with Theosophy as it is usually taught. They will not make more learnedly dogmatic theosophists, but they will

encourage thinking and the search for truth wherever it may be found. There can be no question that the list might be improved, but imperfect as it is, it represents a long step in the right direction.

The second feature, even more commendable, is the endeavor to make T. S. members realize that they are citizens of the world of today, and should take an active part in all movements tending to the betterment of humanity, to the replacement of outworn methods by newer ones. A very elaborate scheme is presented, including visiting courts, jails, reformatories, hospitals, asylums, schools, slums, art galleries, lectures on public health and much more. Dr. Arundale recommends, and this is most commendable, the reading of books on fascism, socialism, communism, the Soviet Republic, so as to see the world through the eyes of others, a suggestion which might lead Mr. Hearst, Mr. Ham. Fish or the Rev. Walsh to demand that Dr. Arundale be excluded from the U. S. as a dangerous alien.

All this is excellent and it is to be hoped that it will do something towards awakening in theosophists a sense of responsibility towards the world they live in. There is, to be sure, a "Theosophical Order of Service", founded by Mrs Besant and conducted as a sort of subsidiary of the T. S. But, without intending to reflect on those conducting it, it seems to make but small progress, at least in America, if one can judge by reading the monthly reports in *The American Theosophist*. Work in preparing Braille books for the blind is excellent, though it would seem to be prompted mainly by the desire to teach them Theosophy. Fads are predominant, some of them good, some bad; vegetarianism, anti-vivisectionism, anti-vaccinationism, dietetics, find a place along with drama, dancing and other arts, and more attention is paid to caring for animals than for men, women and children. Mr. Logan, "Chief Brother" for America, says: "If the Theosophical Order of Service could free all the congested Theosophy which tends to clog the auras of our lodge members, its existence would be justified even if its efforts made no visible impression in the outer world" (May *Amer. Theos.*, p. 115). Mr. Logan complains that it is difficult to interest theosophists in practical matters. One may hope that Dr. Arundale's pronouncements will jog them up a little, even though he advocates visiting anti-vivisection societies and vegetarian restaurants, and does not mention a single book which will give them a true outlook on the bases of our physiological knowledge.

As for Dr. Arundale, as *Critic* readers know, I have criticized his ways and see no reason for retracting anything I have said. He is hugely egotistic; he has but the slenderest idea of what Theosophy is, as his own statements show; he cannot conceive that anybody can do anything properly without his directing them just how to do it; he starts all sorts of activities, barely getting them under way and then neglecting or forgetting them; he spouts forth a continual tempest of words, of half-digested plans. Nevertheless some of them are valuable, and in view of what has been said above I am beginning to wonder whether he is not perhaps the best available presidential timber the T. S. could have selected. As matters stand at present the Adyar T. S. seems to be the only theosophical organization which shows the least tendency to recognize its duties to the world of today and to do its bit towards alleviating the abominable conditions existing everywhere. Granting that permanent reforms depend on a radical change in human character, one has to remember that a reasonably healthy social life, not to be acquired in the midst of poverty, misery and crime, is a prerequisite for moral and spiritual advancement. Soaring into the empyrean and discussing abstract questions is but fiddling while Rome burns. The Adyar T. S. is showing some reaction to present world conditions, while as for the others, they might as well be living in the middle ages, so little realization do they show of the crying needs of the moment. If I may be pardoned the simile, the Adyar T. S. seems to be furnishing a huge amount of manure, but in it seeds which will grow to useful plants.

Manly P. Hall's "Words to the Wise"

Words to the Wise; A practical Guide to the Occult Sciences.
By Manly P. Hall. 172 pages, cloth. Los Angeles, 1936. \$2.00
from the O. E. LIBRARY.

This is virtually a reprint of Manly P. Hall's Monthly Letters for the year May, 1935, to April, 1936, to which attention has been called from time to time in the *CARRIC*. Had I been asked for a suitable title I might have selected "Words for the Unwary" Those who are inherently wise may not need the warnings; others if they are really desirous of advancement, will take every word to heart.

Three classes of people are dealt with. First, those who are out for the cash and who take advantage of the craving for knowledge, or, it may be, the desire for personal acquisitions, to secure a following, by pretentious claims to superior knowledge, to contact with "Masters", to being initiates, arhats, yogis, messengers and what not. These milk their followers either by often exorbitant charges for instruction, by fees for elevating the seeker after truth at lightning speed to the higher levels, or by the more insidious method of working them for voluntary "love offerings", and thereby acquire for themselves a greater or less—very frequently greater—abundance of the good things of earth. Promises of communicating quick methods of initiation, or of getting health, wealth and love, in short, "what you want", are the marks of such charlatans; they all bear the label clearly discernible to those who can see: "I am a fraud". Then there are those whose intentions are honorable, who really want to help, and who pose as teachers because they think themselves in touch with higher beings who authorize them to speak in their behalf, but who are really self-deluded. While not scoundrels like the first, in the end the result for the victim is much the same.

On the other hand there are two receptive classes, one consisting of those who are prompted by purely selfish motives and who are seeking the quickest way to realize them, even to the practice of black magic. These, if they are ultimately fooled, are getting just what they deserve and we can hardly pity them for being stung—probably it is the only way in which they can be made to learn.

Another very large class, however, consists of real seekers after truth, of persons who earnestly desire to lead a higher life and who grasp at anything seeming to offer the opportunity. Many of these people, utterly lacking in discrimination, to say nothing of a sense of the ridiculous, will swallow the most absurd rubbish, the worst jargon of words without an idea behind them, provided it is baited with a minimum of truth and put forward by persons who can assume an air of sincerity. Everything from "Ascended Masters" whose degree of ascension is indicated by their insipid banality, to angels in white gowns and mirific colored rays, "love stars" and the like, is accepted. Very often these well-meaning people, having drunk deep at one well of nonsense, seek still another and another. They are chronic "fallers", falling for every new fad that comes along, and the more joyously the more preposterous it is, finally having to sit in sackcloth and ashes lamenting their folly and, too often, their departed dollars.

Mr. Hall's book is addressed largely to those who are being misled by specious promises or rapid success, material or spiritual. In his inimitable way he describes without naming them—though one who observes may recognize some of them—the various kinds of deliberate occult swindlers, as well as those who honestly pose as teachers, but who are but blind leaders of the blind. He then addresses the other group, numbered by the million, it would seem, who are being deluded and misled, with warnings and advice which, would they heed them, would save them endless disappointment, which would at least tell them which way not to go and some characteristics of the true path. Lack of space prevents my quoting even a few of the many striking passages which

the unwary should take to heart. Never was there a time when such a book was more needed. The author's style is fascinating and while I am not committing myself to all of his philosophical views, it matters little. One cannot fail to appreciate the forcefulness and sincerity, to say nothing of modesty, which pervades every page.

At the Periscope

Latest News in Brief.—Mrs. Jean Roberts Albert, editor of the *Vegetarian* magazine, died May 28th, aged 72 years.—German Section of Adyar T. S. dissolved by order of its Council.—Adyar T. S. shows slight increase in membership.—Fraternization Convention at Buffalo a great success; next convention to be held at Hamilton, Ont., Canada.—Jinarajadasa donates \$1,000 to Australian Section, Adyar T. S.—AMORC Imperator Lewis sued for \$200,000 libel damages by his former attorney Aram; Aram charges Lewis threatened his life.—Imperator of AMORC wishes to God he could withdraw what he wrote about Mount Shasta, but continues to sell book; too many Mount Shasta fakers in the field; does he mean Ballard & Co.?—L. W. Rogers announces discontinuance of his monthly *Ancient Wisdom* with Feb., 1937.—Membership of American Section, T. S. (Adyar) drops from 4,420 to 4,317, a loss of 103.—George Arundale says he has lost his "causal body"; we feared it; it explains much; says he "wept bitterly" about it; finder will please return to G.S.A., Adyar, carriage prepaid.—Ballardites busy charging the earth's "gas belts", but some gas escapes on to the audience; "Angels of the Blue Lightning" also busy; also big job for "Oromosis" and "Tall Master from Venus"; "All-Seeing Eye of God" impounded at Royal Teton; utter copyrighted imprecations against opponents; Jesus takes a hand in advertising Ballard's books.—Baird T. Spalding says he personally shook hands with Jesus; which one?; says he has 340 different bodies.—The Hare Brothers mistake Shakespearian English for "American", and Lucretius wrote "Dog-Latin".

A Profane Mongoose.—The mongoose is a small mammal shaped like a weasel and of the size of a cat. According to a story in the June *Theosophical Movement* (p. 118) a farmhouse on the Isle of Man shelters a mongoose which can talk, using vulgar, abusive and profane language and declaring itself to be the Holy Ghost. London psychical researchers visited the place, but the mongoose wasn't at home and they had to be satisfied with the stories of the family and neighbors. This reminds one of the account given by Dion Fortune (*The Inner Light*, July, 1932, p. 8) of a fire salamander which emerged from the hot coals of her fireplace, lived about the house for several weeks, was seen by the other occupants, grew to be nearly five feet long and learned to walk on its hind legs. *The Theosophical Movement*, which claims that Theosophy has an explanation for everything, an answer to every question, attempts an explanation of the mongoose by references to *Isis Unveiled*. For my part, I think time could be saved by referring the matter to Dr. de Purucker or Mr. C. J. Ryan, of Point Loma, who believe that tigers, rats and whales are the offspring of men. Perhaps this mongoose is the offspring of some Manxman—he dropped a scab and it became a mongoose.

C. J. on the Monad.—Mr. Jinarajadasa, in his talk at Wheaton in 1935, printed in the book *Unfolding the Intuition* (p. 112), repeats his former statement that "It was Dr. Besant who introduced the concept of the monad." This must be a case of unfolding intuition, for had C. J. referred to the index to *The Secret Doctrine* (revised ed.) he would have found 351 references to the monad. He grudgingly admits that H.P.B. had something to say about it in *The Secret Doctrine*, but then she was muddled; it was Annie Besant who "brought it into the highlight."

Buffalo "Fraternization Convention".—Judging from the report in July *Canadian Theosophist* The Theosophical Convention at Buffalo a joyous event and a number of interesting papers were presented. The registered attendance was 162 against 194 last year, about equally divided between the U. S. and Canada. This issue of *The Canadian Theosophist* can be had for ten cents (U. S. coin, not stamps) from the publication office, 33 Forest Avenue, Hamilton, Ont., Canada. I am not reflecting on the quality of the other excellent papers when I say that I particularly liked that of Dudley W. Barr on "The Presentation of Theosophy". It appears from this report and from the final program sent out that the term "Fraternization" Convention has been dropped and that of "International Theosophical Students' Convention" adopted. Indeed, the fraternization appears to have been limited to the fact that the convention was open to members of any theosophical society or of none. No societies are mentioned and the affiliation of the several speakers was concealed, and could be recognized only by those who happened to know it already. This I think is greatly to be regretted. The conventions were originated with the idea of openly promoting fraternization between the different societies, yet here we find the idea skulking in the lobby. Nevertheless when one reads the talk of Dr. Arundale and Mr. Cook (to say nothing of others) about their society being THE Theosophical Society, one feels that the mixing of students of various affiliations will be very useful, even if they act like a lot of St. Peters. The convention next year will be held at Hamilton, Ont., Canada. <

No Rest for AMORC.—AMORC seems to be continually embroiled in lawsuits. From the *San Jose Mercury Herald* of June 27th and July 2d it appears that one Virgil Rankin, an advertising agent who had done some advertising for AMORC, brought suit against the AMORC outfit for malicious prosecution and was awarded \$21,000 damages. It appears that because of some squabble over advertising AMORC caused Rankin's arrest and imprisonment for 39 days and that stories reflecting on Rankin's domestic affairs were circulated. The story is long and uninteresting, but a comic feature of the trial was that the AMORC Imperator stated on cross-examination that he had been in the advertising business for 25 years, but gave it up in 1917 to devote his time to AMORC. The attorney for Rankin pointed out that 1917-25 equals 1892 and that the Imperator was born in 1883. Hence he was in the advertising business at the early age of nine years. Surprising? Not exactly. Considering his displays of wisdom in his AMORC documents and his mastery of the technique of getting people to accept his claims one wonders whether he was not, like Tsong-Ka-Pa, born with a full set of teeth and a long beard.

Ernest Wood's Book Ruffles Mrs. Ransom's Feathers.—Ernest Wood's new book, *Is This Theosophy?* (see review in March *CRRIC*) does not please Mrs. Josephine Ransom, General Secretary of the British Section T. S. (Adyar). She disposes of it in four lines (March *Theosophical News and Notes*, p. 16), to wit: "To the question which forms the above title, the answer is emphatically no. As there is remarkably little about Theosophy in the book; such a title is misleading. It is merely a somewhat uninteresting autobiography and portrays unkindly the late two great leaders of the Theosophical Society." Mrs. Ransom is right in saying that the answer is "emphatically no." It does not aim to tell what Theosophy is, but to show up what it is not, as it deals largely with an exposé of the pseudo-theosophy of the faker Leadbeater, showing beyond question that this Arhat was a fraud. As for Mrs. Besant, he is not only not unkindly, but flattering. Mrs. Ransom will be lucky if anybody says as many nice things about her as Mr. Wood says of Mrs. Besant.

Convention Attendance.—The registered attendance at the Independent Theosophical Convention at Buffalo was 162; that at the convention of the American Section, T. S. (Adyar) at Wheaton was 188. That should be encouraging to the Independents and will perhaps give Mr. Cook something to think about.

Doctor of Divinity Mill.—A Doctor of Divinity diploma mill has been unearthed in the District of Columbia under the guise of a "Christian Church" which conferred the degree of "D. D." upon application on anyone proposing to give clairvoyant or other readings, and upon receipt of as large a gift as the applicant could be squeezed for. No qualifications other than C. O. D. were required. Under the law public clairvoyants and other fortune-tellers have to pay a large annual license fee, which is waived in the case of ministers, who are supposed to give spiritual advice free, or for what is voluntarily offered. Hence the "D. D." The church was equipped with a bishop who was a professional astrologer, collected funds for erecting a church edifice, and seems to have done a thriving business till the police interfered. It was stated that a large proportion of the fortune-tellers and mediums are Reverends and the city treasury has suffered in proportion.

Astrology to Abolish Divorce.—A writer on astrology in the April *Canadian Theosophist* (p. 59) states that "Divorce could be almost entirely eliminated if the State supported a bureau of marriage based upon Astrology." Brilliant idea! John might submit a list of possible partners to the government astrologer and proceed to propose to the one showing up best on her chart. The difficulty would be in getting the several ladies to tell the truth about their exact age in advance of a definite commitment and the subsequent risk of having several breach of promise suits on his hands at once, which would be more costly than a divorce. Besides, such a bureau would be competing with private industry and taking the bread out of the mouths of the ubiquitous fortune-tellers and divorce lawyers, and might be ruled out by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional. No good republican would stand for the scheme.

"The Theosophical World".—This is the monthly news organ of Adyar. It was started in January, is edited by Mrs. Marie Hotchener when she happens not to be touring the world, and at present comprises 24 pages to the issue. One of its chief functions is to afford Dr. Arundale still another channel of self-expression. It must be said, and I am glad to say it, that even if Dr. Arundale's torrent of words shows no sign of slackening to a more modest stream, and although he talks incessantly about himself, he is less prone to give vent to silly remarks than of yore. It appears that there are so many really important things for the Doctor to speak of that he no longer has leisure to meditate on the divinity of his filing cabinet and the mental inferiority of people who wear horn-rimmed spectacles. In the May issue he lays his "I" aside and devotes a considerable article to his wife, Rukmini, whom a casual reader might suppose to be his daughter. As all Adyarites know, Rukmini is quite a dancer, and it is George's supreme desire that she shall become one of the greatest dancers of the world. He wants her to dance so exquisitely that every beholder will at once become a theosophist. His solicitude is really touching. I hope it may be so, for if the time ever comes that the Doctor's fountain of speech and writing dries up, she may be able to support him through her art.

Lost, Strayed or Stolen.—What has become of Lieut-Colonel Arthur E. Powell, last heard from in 1928 in a large book on *The Causal Body*? This was based on the Leadbeaterian revelations, and in an earlier book—*The Mental Body*, p. xii—the Colonel informs us that he thought it needless to consult *The Secret Doctrine*. Any authentic information will be rewarded with a check on the Bank of Devachan, Ltd.

Penrose the Dowser.—The scientific editor of the *Canadian Theosophist* gives us an account in the July issue (p. 159) of the remarkable feats of Miss Evelyn M. Penrose, "Official Water-diviner to the Government of British Columbia", in detecting water, oil and ores by means of the divining rod. The story is remarkable enough if true, but I refer the editor to a more remarkable one told by herself in the March, 1933, *Occult Review* (pp. 174-82). She claims that she does not have to "dowse" on the spot; a mere map of the locality will enable her to detect water or ores on land hundreds of miles distant. She moves a pencil over the map, holding a pendulum in the other hand. When the pencil touches a spot where there is water or mineral the pendulum starts swinging. A man for whom she performed this feat exclaimed "Well, I'm damned". At least, so she writes. It may be discourteous to doubt a lady's word, but I can't help feeling that if she continues to tell such—well, I don't want to use too strong a word—she will risk being damned herself. It appears that these stories originate with her and no confirmatory evidence is forthcoming. I haven't forgotten Mr. Morley-Martin and his live fish made from fused quartz, about which there is an ominous silence of late, even at Point Loma.

Notes from the Antipodes.—While a foreign member of the T. S. I have always been deeply interested in theosophical doings in Australia. At one time Australia was a battleground, when Mr. T. H. Martyn was living and the T. S. Loyalty League was fighting for decency against the infamous Leadbeater and the autocratic methods of Mrs. Besant. In those days news from Australia was awaited with great impatience. The police investigation of Leadbeater's rascalities, the firing of Mr. Martyn and his colleagues from the T. S. by Mrs. Besant, the ejection of the large Sydney Lodge, the attempt of Mrs. Besant, through Mrs. Ransom, to get possession of the Sydney Lodge property, the building and flunking of the Lord's hippodrome near Sydney, the coming of the Mighty Bishop Arundale and the general mess he made of affairs, all these were exciting and spicy reading. Since then the Adyar Section has dwindled from 2,300 to 1,200 and the pretentious magazine, filled with Leadbeaterian piffle, with fairy and angel stuff, has shrunk to the little *News and Notes*, interesting only because of the pathetic efforts of Miss Clara Codd to keep it alive. Now, the June-July issue, changed back to *Theosophy in Australia* and considerably enlarged, consists mostly of a full report of the annual convention at Melbourne. I read every word of it. Here I can report only two or three items. Nothing seems to have been done or said about the 2GB theosophical broadcasting station scandal and Dr. Arundale's connection with it (see last CRITIC). Clara Codd, having thrown up the General Secretaryship, Mr. R. G. Litchfield and Miss Mary K. Neff were proposed and Mr. Litchfield (said to be a competent executive) got the job, while Miss Neff was chosen National Lecturer. This is the lady who thinks that "there is no other society [than Adyar] which claims to know and teach the 'Secret Doctrine' before the world." (See Dec.-Jan. CRITIC). Mr. Geoffrey Hodson was to be brought to Australia with his stage properties, fairies and angels, if the Section could afford it. A Director of Archives was authorized, who should write a history of the Section, and the Section's funny man, Dr. Bean, was considered. This is the gentleman who at one time openly defended in the Section's magazine the "Leadbeater method" for boys, and who was at the root of much of the trouble between the Sydney Lodge and Mrs. Besant. He would like the job and can be depended on to make it as worthless as possible as history—he is simply cracked on Leadbeater.

A Gem from George Arundale.—"There must be some very intimate relation between Theosophy and The Theosophical Society, or they would not have been reborn at the same time and to the same people." (April *Theosophist*, p. 3.)

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Not a few, lacking discrimination and critical ability, have been imposed on by the arguments in the recent book, *Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?*, by H. E. and W. L. Hare, attempting to prove all the supposed letters from Mahatmas bogus, concocted and written by H. P. Blavatsky, who was therefore one of the greatest impostors of her time. That one of the authors was long a member of the T. S. and therefore supposed to be a competent authority has doubtless influenced some. This and forthcoming issues of the CRITIC will contain a series of articles analyzing the book and presenting evidence for the defense ignored by the authors. You should subscribe for yourself and some friends at once. Annual subscription, U. S. and Canada, 50 cents; foreign, two shillings sixpence or the equivalent (62 cents). Canadian paper currency and stamps, British stamps and blank postal orders accepted. Those interested in seeing how much fallacy, folly and folderol can be compressed into one volume can get the Hare book from the O. E. LIBRARY for \$3.75. The following, presenting the defense, can also be supplied:

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Ernest Wood's new book, *Is This Theosophy?*, just published, is the best exposé of Arhat Leadbeater yet written. Mr. Wood was long his private secretary and quite familiar with the wiles of the "Grand Old Man". \$5.50, from the O. E. LIBRARY.

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A History of Science and its Relations with Philosophy and Religion, by William Cecil Dampier, M. A., F. R. S., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, etc. pp. xxi, 514. Macmillan Co., 1930. \$4.00 from the O. E. LIBRARY.

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